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Dr. Joshua Lederberg
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Dear Joshua:

Thank you very much for your note bringing to my attention Platt's article on the effect of maternal sickling on perinatal mortality. It was very timely for the same day the spirit moved the powers that be at the National Heart and Lung Institute to call me for a conference on a sickle-cell proposal, following my many telephone calls, pleading and cajoling.

I met with Dr. Zuckel who is the Associate Director for Field Clinical Trials and two members of his staff. I think that they were duly impressed both with the proposal and the article and expressed willingness to support the proposal to some extent but then they proceeded to give me a very hard time. A few of the institutions in the Collaborative Study did random screening of their own and we do have data on some Negro women concerning their sickling status. Dr. Zuckel wants us to produce for him preliminary tabulations of the existing material to see if there is anything worthwhile there. I am extremely reluctant to do it because the only thing that such tabulations will tell us will have to do with maternal variables but not with outcome (child) variables. It is true that 50% of the children of sickling women will also be sicklers but the control population will be diluted by an equal number of sickling children from sickling fathers who are unknown. Therefore, the effects of sickling will have to be extremely strong to show a significant relationship with outcome variables. I think that they are trying to get out of the long-term study, which, however, is the only proper way to proceed.

My own position is also a little difficult. I am still with the Perinatal Research Branch but the philosophy here now is to finish the Collaborative Project as soon as possible. Any activity beyond that required by the protocol is frowned upon and will probably be

my assistant, nina C.

discontinued. I am trying desperately to save the sickle-cell project and I hope to be able to do it. I will keep you posted on the progress.

With all best regards,

Very sincerely



Ntinios C. Myrianthopoulos, Ph.D.
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